What is claimed is:

1.   A message broker for managing subscription requests in a multicast messaging system comprising a plurality of publishers publishing information to the broker and a plurality of subscribers subscribing to information received from one or more publishers, the broker comprising:

means for receiving a subscription request pointing to topic information in which the requesting subscriber is interested, the topic information defining a specific topic within a topic hierarchy;

means for parsing said request to determine if said request includes a wildcard; and

means, responsive to determining that said request does include a wildcard, for instructing the requesting subscriber to listen on a multicast address associated with the topic in the topic hierarchy which precedes said wildcard.

2.   The message broker of claim 1 comprising:
means for assigning the multicast address to said preceding topic.

3.   The message broker of claim 2 wherein the multicast address for the preceding topic is inherited from parent topic information

4.   A method for managing subscription requests in a multicast messaging system, the messaging system comprising a plurality of publishers publishing information to a broker and a plurality of subscribers subscribing to information received from one or more publishers, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a subscription request pointing to topic information in which the requesting subscriber is interested, the topic information defining a specific topic within a topic hierarchy;

parsing said request to determine if said request includes a wildcard; and

responsive to determining that said request does include a wildcard, for instructing the requesting subscriber to listen on a multicast address associated with the topic in the topic hierarchy which precedes said wildcard.

5.   The method of claim 4 comprising:

assigning the multicast address to said preceding topic.

6.   The method of claim 5 wherein the multicast address for the preceding topic is inherited from parent topic information.

7.   A computer program for managing subscription requests
in a multicast messaging system, the messaging system
comprising a plurality of publishers publishing information
to a broker and a plurality of subscribers subscribing to
information received from one or more publishers, the
computer program comprising program code means adapted to
perform, when said program is run on a computer, the steps
of:

receiving a subscription request pointing to topic
information in which the requesting subscriber is
interested, the topic information defining a specific topic
within a topic hierarchy;

parsing said request to determine if said request
includes a wildcard; and

responsive to determining that said request does
include a wildcard, for instructing the requesting
subscriber to listen on a multicast address associated with
the topic in the topic hierarchy which precedes said
wildcard.

8.   The computer program of claim 7, wherein the program
code means is also adapted to perform the following step
when said program is run on a computer:

assigning the multicast address to said preceding
topic.

9.   The computer program of claim 8, wherein the multicast address for the preceding topic is inherited from parent topic information.

10.   A multicast messaging system for managing subscription requests, the system comprising:

      a message broker;

      a plurality of publishers publishing information to the broker;

      a plurality of subscribers subscribing to information received from one or more publishers,

      the subscribers comprising:

      means for registering subscription requests with the broker,

      the broker comprising:

      means for receiving a subscription request pointing to topic

      information in which the requesting subscriber is interested, the topic information defining a specific topic within a topic hierarchy;

      means for parsing said request to determine if said request includes

      a wildcard; and

      means, responsive to determining that said request does include a

wildcard, for instructing the requesting subscriber to listen on a   multicast address associated with the topic in the topic hierarchy which precedes said wildcard.